

## HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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The intent of this Policy is to create and maintain a harassment-free environment throughout all levels and activities of the organization.

The Code of Ethics and Conduct for Toastmasters International, prohibits members of Clubs from engaging in or condoning conduct which is offensive or in poor taste. This policy defines one type of conduct which has been and will continue to be regarded as offensive, in poor taste, and unacceptable.

Violations of this standard, or of any other standard contained in the Code of Ethics and Conduct, may subject the individual to removal from Club membership, and/or removal from service as an officer at the Club, District, or International level, and/or removal from good standing with Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters International maintains a strict policy prohibiting all types of harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy prohibits sexual harassment in any form, including but not limited to verbal, physical, and visual harassment.

Sexual harassment includes:

- (a) making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature a condition of participation or advancement in any Toastmasters program, or;
- (b) making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis of participation or advancement decisions, or;
- (c) creating an intimidating, offensive, or “hostile program environment.” “Hostile environment” harassment exists where sexual conduct, comments, or conditions of a sexual nature alter the conditions under which an individual experiences the Toastmasters program and creates an abusive program environment. This includes inappropriate touching, lewd jokes, displaying explicit or sexually suggestive material, or repeated unwelcome requests for a sexual or dating relationship, for example.

Any member who believes he or she has been harassed should promptly report the facts of the incident(s) and the names of the individuals involved to the following officers, depending on whether the alleged offender is:

A member of a Club who holds no office: To the Club President initially and, if the member is not satisfied with the substance or timeliness of the Club President’s response, to any other member of the Club Executive Committee. The Club officer receiving the report shall conduct a confidential investigation of the allegation and report the outcome to the Club Executive Committee, which shall take or commence whatever action may be appropriate to resolve the matter.

A Club Officer: To the Club President initially if the President is not implicated. If the President is implicated or if the member is not satisfied with the substance or timeliness of the Club President’s response, to any other member of the Club Executive Committee. The Club officer receiving the report shall conduct a confidential investigation of the allegation and report the outcome to the Club Executive Committee, which shall take or commence whatever action may be appropriate to resolve the matter.

A District Officer: To the District Governor initially if the District Governor is not implicated. If the District Governor is implicated or if the member is not satisfied with the substance or timeliness of the District Governor's response, to any other member of the District Executive Committee. The District officer receiving the report shall conduct a confidential investigation of the allegation and report the outcome to the District Executive Committee, which shall take or commence whatever action may be appropriate to resolve the matter.

An International Officer, including an International Director: To the International President initially if the International President is not implicated. If the International President is implicated or if the member is not satisfied with the substance or timeliness of the International President's response, to any other member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The International officer receiving the report shall conduct a confidential investigation of the allegation and report the outcome to the Executive Committee, which shall take or commence whatever action may be appropriate to resolve the matter.

An employee or paid agent of Toastmasters International: To the Executive Director initially, if the Executive Director is not implicated. If the Executive Director is implicated or if the member is not satisfied with the substance or timeliness of the Executive Director's response, to any member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director or International officer receiving the report shall conduct a confidential investigation of the allegation. Except where the Executive Director is implicated, the Executive Director shall take or commence whatever action may be appropriate to resolve the matter. If the Executive Director is implicated, the Board of Directors (or if the matter requires immediate action, the Executive Committee) shall take or commence whatever action may be appropriate to resolve the matter.

In each case, appropriate action to resolve the matter should include steps to minimize the likelihood of a reoccurrence, if possible.

Regardless of the level at which an incident occurs, if any person involved in the matter believes that it was not resolved in accordance with the policies and procedures of Toastmasters International, or if the reporting procedure described above is not feasible, such person should promptly report the situation to the Executive Director of Toastmasters International. Any claim, threat of lawsuit, or lawsuit involving a harassment incident or any incident occurring above the Club level should also be reported promptly to the Executive Director. Even in situations where reporting to the Executive Director is not required, members and officers may seek advice from World Headquarters staff to clarify any policy or procedure.

Retaliating or discriminating against any individual member for reporting harassment is prohibited.

Toastmasters International intends that its policies and procedures be in full conformance with current statutes and caselaw on prohibitions against sexual harassment so as to afford members the broadest protection under the law. Therefore, for Toastmasters programs occurring within the jurisdiction of any state or other public authority, having laws applicable to private, volunteer organizations substantially similar to Toastmasters, where those laws are stricter than what is stated above, members and Clubs in those jurisdictions shall be required to observe the stricter standards.

Toastmasters International recognizes that the issue of whether sexual harassment has occurred requires a factual determination based on all the evidence received. Toastmasters International also recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment can have serious effects on innocent men and women. We trust that all members will continue to act in a responsible and professional manner to maintain a positive environment supporting every person's desire for self-improvement within the Toastmasters educational program.

